

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

A. Background

The Qur'an is a Holy Book containing the words of Allah¹, revealed to Prophet Muhammad Peace Be Upon Him (PBUH) through the Angel Gabriel. The Qur'an serves as guidance for humankind² to live a rewarding life in this life and the hereafter.³ It is suitable for all generations. It is a source of strength, courage, and inspiration for all ages of Muslims.

The Qur'an is guarded against any alterations, and no man can forge a part of it, let alone a book similar to it.⁴ The Holy Book is a complete book containing wide varieties of knowledge and teachings.⁵ Different topics are discussed in the Qur'an, and one of the major themes is on Man.

Allah created many things, the heavens, and the earth, the Angels and the Jinns, including Man, which is Allah's significant creation. Man is Allah's unique creation. When the Angels and the Jinns are inclined to good and evil only, respectively, Man is inclined to both.

¹ Muhammad Amin Suma, *Ulumul Quran*, (Jakarta: Raja Grafindo Persada, 2013), p. 23

² Departemen Agama RI, *al-Quran dan Tafsirnya*, (Jakarta: Lentera Abadi, 2010), p. xxxi

³ Harifuddin Cawidu, *Konsep Kufr dalam Al-Qur'an, Suatu Kajian Teologis dengan Pendekatan Tafsir Tematik*, (Jakarta: Bulan Bintang, 1991), p. 3

⁴ QS. al-Baqarah (2): 23

⁵ QS. al-Kahfi (18): 29 dan QS. Luqman (31): 27

Allah created Man intending to establish a vicegerent on the earth.⁶ Allah made Man his representative in creating order on the earth. Man is mentioned in the Qur'an in several terms, which are *al-Basyar*, *al-'Abd*, *al-Nas* or *al-Ins* or *al-Insan*, *Khalifah*, and Bani Adam.

Man lives on this earth, not just as an individual but also in society. As an individual, the Qur'an stated that he has weaknesses, and his fundamental flaws are "pettiness" and "narrowness of mind."⁷ These two flaws are where the significant evils spring.⁸ But Man has his remedy in facing his imperfections, which is *taqwa*. *Taqwa* helps Man in protecting himself against the evil consequences of his conducts.⁹

The Qur'an mentioned several duties or responsibilities of Man in society. Being in a society, Man not only interact with other people, but he must also strengthen the bonds between them. The Qur'an aims in strengthening relationships in the basic family unit as well as the wider Muslim community.¹⁰ Family bonding includes filial loyalty.¹¹ The Qur'an also declared that all Muslims are brothers and give priorities to needy Muslims over themselves.¹²

⁶ QS. al-Baqarah (2): 30

⁷ Fazlur Rahman, *Major Themes of the Qur'ān* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 2009), p. 17

⁸ *Ibid.*

⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 20

¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 28

¹¹ *Ibid.*

¹² *Ibid.*

This thesis will discuss the interpretation of Ahmad Sonhadji in his book *Tafseer 'Abr al-Athir* on Man as an individual and Man in society. The author chose Ahmad Sonhadji in this research because he was a scholar that used to study and teach in different countries such as Singapore, Indonesia, and Brunei. He was also a businessman and was fluent in a few languages such as Malay, Arabic, and English, which help him in monitoring foreign radio broadcasts and making reports for the Japanese. His interpretation was also the only complete interpretation of the Holy Book in Singapore.

Observing the above background, it is interesting to discuss on Man's weaknesses and the bond between Muslims in the Qur'an in the interpretation in *Tafseer 'Abr al-Athir*. The concept of Man is yet to be studied from the viewpoint of Ahmad Sonhadji in his interpretation and this research helps to understand deeper it focusing on Man's weaknesses and its remedy, and the bonds between the Muslim community.

B. Research Questions

1. How is man's weaknesses described as in the Qur'an according to Ahmad Sonhadji and what is the remedy for it?
2. How is bonding between Muslim brothers depicted in the Qur'an according to Ahmad Sonhadji?

C. Objectives and Benefits of Research

This research aims to understand Man's weaknesses in the Qur'an as an individual and its remedy, and the bonding in society according to Ahmad Sonhadji in his Tafseer 'Abr al-Athir.

Academically, the benefit of this research is to be an insight into future research regarding or related to Man from the Quranic perspective. As for the community, this research can help them in understanding their weaknesses and how to overcome them as an individual and to strengthen the bonds in society.